

# Best Test Debuts in India vs England Series History

The **India vs England Test series** is one of the oldest and most prestigious rivalries in cricket history. Dating back to 1932, when India played its first-ever Test match against England at Lord's, this contest has witnessed iconic battles, unforgettable performances, and the rise of many cricketing legends. Among those moments, some of the most cherished are the exceptional Test debuts that left an instant mark on the series and the sport.

Whether it was a youngster making headlines on debut or a debutant changing the course of the match with bat or ball, several players have enjoyed dream starts in this historic rivalry. In this blog, we look at the **best Test debuts in India vs England series history**, celebrating those special performances that stood out on the big stage.



## 1. Axar Patel – 7-Wicket Haul on Debut (2021)

- **Venue:** Chennai
- **Debut Match:** 2nd Test, February 2021
- **Figures:** 7 wickets in the match (2/40 & 5/60)

**Axar Patel's debut** during the 2021 home series was nothing short of spectacular. Playing his first-ever Test match, Axar stepped into the role of India's second spinner alongside Ashwin and delivered a match-winning performance.

He picked up a five-wicket haul in the second innings and constantly troubled England's batsmen with his accuracy, bounce, and subtle variations. His debut set the tone for a sensational series in which he claimed **27 wickets in just 3 matches**. Axar's performance ranks among the **best Test debuts in India vs England series history** due to both its immediate impact and the consistency that followed.

## 2. Sourav Ganguly – Elegant Century at Lord's (1996)

- **Venue:** Lord's, London
- **Debut Match:** 2nd Test, June 199
- **Score:** 131 runs

Few debuts have been as memorable as **Sourav Ganguly's** at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground. Walking into a high-pressure match, Ganguly showed remarkable composure and class, scoring a beautiful century on debut. His 131-run knock, filled with elegant drives and wristy flicks, announced the arrival of a future Indian captain and one of the most impactful batters of his era.

Not only did he score a hundred, but his innings came against a strong English attack in challenging conditions, making it one of the **top debut performances in IND vs ENG Tests**.

## 3. KS Ranjitsinhji – 154 on Debut for England (1896)

- **Venue:** Old Trafford, Manchester
- **Debut Match:** Only Test, July 1896
- **Score:** 154

Though India wasn't a Test-playing nation in 1896, **KS Ranjitsinhji**, an Indian prince, played for England and produced a sublime debut century against Australia. However, it was during his matches against India's pre-independence teams and influence in cricket culture that his significance grew.

Later, when England toured India post-independence, his legacy loomed large. While technically not a debut against India, Ranjitsinhji's influence on Indo-English cricketing ties makes his name worth noting in the context of early Test history and its heroes.

## 4. R Ashwin – Five-Wicket Haul & 100+ Match Points (2011)

- **Venue:** Delhi
- **Debut Match:** 1st Test, November 2011

- **Figures:** 3/81 & 6/47 | Also scored 35 runs

**Ravichandran Ashwin**, now a modern-day Indian legend, made his Test debut in the 2011 home series against the visiting English side. He made an instant impact by claiming **9 wickets in the match**, including a six-wicket haul in the second innings.

With a calm demeanor and deceptive bowling variations, Ashwin was a force from Day 1. He also contributed valuable runs down the order, proving himself as a true all-rounder. His debut was the beginning of a dominant Test career, especially against England, where he has since taken over 90 wickets. This performance easily places Ashwin among the **best debutants in India vs England Test series history**.

## 5. Prithvi Shaw – Blazing Start Against England Lions (Unofficial Test)

Though not an official Test debut against England, **Prithvi Shaw** gained attention through his performances against the **England Lions**, scoring freely and aggressively. He would go on to make a record-breaking debut against the West Indies in 2018. His style, however, was honed in the series against England A, showing how important the England vs India platform is in shaping future Test stars.

## 6. Jack Leach – Spin on Debut in India (2018)

- **Venue:** Chennai
- **Debut Match:** 4th Test, 2018
- **Figures:** 2/113

Though not immediately headline-worthy, **Jack Leach's Test debut in India** deserves a mention for the way he handled difficult conditions. Over time, he grew into a dependable spinner for England in subcontinental conditions. His journey, starting from a modest debut, developed into impactful performances in later matches during the 2021 series where he played a key role in England's only win of the series.

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## 7. Rahul Dravid – Steady 95 at Lord's (1996)

- **Venue:** Lord's, London
- **Debut Match:** 2nd Test, June 1996
- **Score:** 95 runs

While Sourav Ganguly was stealing the spotlight with a debut hundred, another Indian legend was quietly making his mark—**Rahul Dravid**. Batting at No. 7, Dravid scored a composed 95, narrowly missing out on a century. His calm presence, technical precision, and mature shot selection gave India solidity at a young age.

David's performance on debut hinted at the greatness that would follow. His innings remains one of the **best Test debut performances against England**, setting the foundation for a legendary career.

## Why Test Debuts in IND vs ENG Series Are Special

Making a debut in **India vs England Tests** is unlike any other experience. The rivalry, the pressure, and the history surrounding the series make it a massive occasion for any cricketer. Debutants face world-class opposition and often in challenging conditions—be it the green pitches of England or the spinning tracks of India.

The players highlighted above made their first appearance count, setting high standards from the start. These debut performances have, in many cases, laid the foundation for long and successful careers.

## Final Thoughts

The **best Test debuts in India vs England series history** are more than just statistics—they're powerful statements made on one of cricket's greatest stages. From Axar's spinning masterclass to Ganguly's iconic century at Lord's, each performance added a memorable chapter to this timeless rivalry.

As new talents continue to emerge, fans will always look back at these incredible debuts with admiration and pride. They remind us that in the world of **Test cricket**, every beginning carries the promise of greatness.

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